

B. 2. 46.

The Fifth Edition.

---

R E A S O N S  
FOR  
A D O P T I N G A N  
U N I O N,  
B E T W E E N  
I R E L A N D  
A N D  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

---

If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain—*things cannot remain as they are*—Commercial jealousy is roused—it will increase *with two independent legislatures*—and without an united interest in Commerce, in a Commercial Empire, political Union will receive many shocks, and *separation of interest* must threaten *separation of connexion*, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at, as a possible event.

Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, (now Mr. Speaker,) in the Debate on the Commercial Propositions.

See Debate on the Commercial Propositions by WOODFALL.

---

BY WILLIAM JOHNSON, ESQ.  
AUTHOR OF THE LETTER TO JOSEPH SPENCER, ESQ.

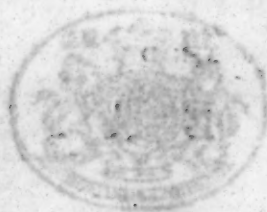
---

D U B L I N:

PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

---

1799.





---

# R E A S O N S,

&c. &c.

---

PERHAPS no people in the world require more time to form a just opinion upon a subject touching their own interest, than the people of this Country: they have all the ardour and inconsiderateness of youth, unsubdued by a long continuance of chastisement and affliction. This by no means proceeds from any radical deficiency of good sense, but from moral causes, which have absolutely prolonged our infancy as a nation. This peculiar character of my Countrymen was never more conspicuous, than from the manner in which the supposed intention of proposing an Union between this Country and Great Britain has been received here; —alarm, disdain, indignation, vengeance,

“ Each, for madness ruled the hour,

“ Would try his own extatic pow’r.”

\* One author states it as his opinion, that the Country’s vengeance would be roused by the bare  
B mention

\* Mr. Jebb.

mention of such a measure; and, after describing, with all due horror, the miserable condition to which we have been reduced, asks, "who, under such circumstances, will venture to express in the honest terms of virtuous indignation, his opinion on the annihilation of our Parliament?" I should be glad to know from this writer, whether the terms, in which he has expressed himself, be honest, or the indignation he has shewn, be virtuous? If they are, why have the "Triangles and the Gallows," whose effects he deplures in such truly melancholy strains, had no effect upon him? The truth is, these angry patriots mean not half they say; for, in a few pages after, the same author describes the PRESENT situation of this Country to be tranquillized and happy, and, through all that remains of his Pamphlet, seems never once to have dreamt of the Gallows or the Triangle.

The only thing consoling in this violent burst of alarm is, that it cannot be lasting. We shall look with a steadier eye than we have yet done, at the object which has excited it; the delusion of our senses will wear away, and we shall smile in the hour of sober recollection, at the idle fears by which we have been made miserable.

To assist, as far as I can, in forwarding this desirable end, I am induced, once more, to intrude upon the public. That I have escaped the fear which has so generally affected others, I do not attribute to any superior sagacity of my own; I owe it to the simple accident of having had my mind long since turned to the consideration



consideration of this question. Engaged, in no way whatever, in the divisions which have distracted this Country, save in a deep sense of that common misery they had brought upon us, in which, as an individual, I took my full share, I have for a considerable time turned my attention to a consideration of the causes of those peculiar evils under which this kingdom has so long laboured. Among them it was easy to trace, neither last nor least, the anomalous connexion which constitutionally binds Ireland to England. As a matter of deliberate regulation between two Countries, it is, I believe, unparalleled in the history of the World;—in its rise, progress and consummation. The only thing resembling it was the connexion between England and Scotland before the Union;—that however, was matter of mere accident, owing to the right of the respective Monarchies vesting in the same person, and it was remedied as soon as the temper of the respective Countries would in any way warrant the change. —Here, however, if we suppose our statute-book to contain the deliberate will of the nation, we have solemnly attached the Monarchy of this Country to the person of the King of Great-Britain and his successors for ever, and we have, by the same statute-book, reserved to ourselves the absolute right of a Parliament of our own to form with the King of Great-Britain the exclusive Government of this Realm.

There are but four *possible* modes by which this Country can be connected with Great-Britain—she  
must



must either be altogether subject to its legislative and executive authority, without any Parliament of her own, and then she is a mere province or colony at the absolute discretion of the parent Country; or she may have the same executive and a separate legislative with a controuling and paramount power in the Parliament of the Sister Kingdom;—this was our condition previous to the year 1782; or she may have the same executive authority with a legislature *theoretically* independent, but *practically* dependent. Such has been the nature of our connexion since the repeal of the 6th of George the 1st: or, lastly, she may be united to Great Britain as one Country, subject to the same executive authority, duly represented in the Common Parliament of the empire, entitled to the same privileges, possessing the same rights, enjoying the same laws, and sharing in the same fortunes.\*

I have set down these four modes of connexion in the order in which they strike my understanding to be severally worthy of adoption—on the two first it is unnecessary to say any thing—they are both degrading to the feeling, and destructive to the happiness, of a people wishing to be free—of the second, we had long and woeful experience—

\* Among these I do not state a connexion by an Union of the executive authority with a separate legislature in this country, *practically*, as well as *theoretically*, independent; because I am stating *possible* modes of connexion, and that such a mode of connexion between countries circumstanced as Great Britain and Ireland are, could not last a moment—Where there is a relative inequality in power between countries *connected as these are*, there never can exist strict independence on the part of the inferior.

rience—it continued, if I may use the expression, the infancy of this Country to an unexampled period—we threw it off upon the first symptom of maturity—we put on the robe of manhood, and thought ourselves perfectly free—Have we been so? or so long as we are connected with Great Britain in the way we now are, can we be so?

This leads me to an examination which I think most material to the discussion of the present question, whether the connexion which now subsists between us and Great Britain be such, as in its nature, considering the state of the two countries, can give us the full enjoyment of those advantages which our population, our soil, and our geographic situation in the globe, in mute but persuasive eloquence, holds out to us.

By freedom, I do not mean merely freedom of person and security of property—I mean also that national freedom which sets afloat the dormant powers of the state, and gives life and vigour to the inertness of buried wealth, whether it lies hid in the restrained industry of its inhabitants, or uselessly reposes in the bowels of the earth—this I call freedom—and I again ask, whether we have enjoyed, or, under our present connexion, are ever likely to enjoy this freedom?

In whatever I shall say upon this subject, I ardently call upon the attention of those who are ready to say in their heart of that connexion, of whatever nature it may be, which will most conduce to the prosperity of the two Countries, *esto perpetua*.

The privilege of being bound by our own laws only has been obtained within the memory  
of



of us all, and though no doubt it considerably improved our condition, and yet more gratified our pride, it still left the Countries connected but in a single point, namely, the Union of the respective executive authority of each in the person of the same individual—had an Union of this kind (supposing such a thing for a moment to have been practicable) taken place between Countries of equal strength and weight, *though while it subsisted*, it would not give that efficacy to the combined power of both which it would have received from a more intimate Union, it would yet entail no particular grievance on either—though it would not increase, it would not, *while it lasted*, check the internal prosperity of either—but, in Countries, situated as these were, the disadvantage to the inferior was striking and obvious; it gave to *that a theoretical* independence and an *actual and necessary* subjection—by giving *that a theoretical* independence, it furnished a perpetual subject of contention between the two Countries, without the possibility of having it practically decided in favour of the inferior, and created, by this necessary subjection, discontent, and heart-burnings in the latter, which scarcely any prosperity could allay.

If any instances have occurred in which the independence of this country has been practically asserted, they will be found to have taken place at times, either \* when England was weak and beset by an host of enemies, or when, † by the suspension of her executive authority, she was as a wreck upon the

\* 1782.

† 1789.



the waters; such instances, when the cause of them is considered, are the most striking proofs I could produce of the truth of the position I have laid down. Indeed it required no proof. It is one of those self-evident propositions which we at once admit without recurring either to practice or experience; its truth rests upon the unchangeable relation of quantity, greater and less. This relation must ever continue the same, while our connexion remains such as it is. Were the internal circumstances of this Country other than they are, I think such a connexion would, so long as it lasted, be adequate to our rational happiness and prosperity as a nation; and I would not recur to an Union from any other motive than to give permanency and security to that happiness and prosperity;—to guard against the insolence of wealth and power, that might make us forget the assistance by which we had climbed to greatness, and, in the silly pride of standing alone in the world, endanger the safety of the British empire, and render us an easy prey to French ambition.

In any condition, then, that I can suppose this Country to be, whether harassed by divisions as it is, or in the full enjoyment of the fruits of industry and quiet, I would recommend an Union, as a scheme of the wisest policy she could pursue. In speaking this language, I address myself solely to those who wish the Countries to remain connected for ever; who desire to guard “against the folly of those who are honest, and the machinations of those who are not so;” who consider

sider the joint and continued efforts of every part of the British empire as necessary, in the present condition of Europe, to the security of the whole,—who think, that at once to give the most efficient power to the State, and fully and perfectly to secure the Liberty and Property of the Subject, are the ultimate objects of the British Constitution; and who will not hesitate, if they can do it without a sacrifice of principle, to vary their means in order to attain their end.

We have hitherto endeavoured to secure the connexion, and promote the prosperity of the two countries by a simple Union of the executive authority of each with distinct and independent Legislatures. A connexion more slight could scarcely be imagined; we touch politically in a single point only—between countries of equal strength and power, such an Union would not have lasted a moment; and where it has taken place between a greater and inferior country, every step that diminishes the inequality between them, lessens the probability of its continuance. This consideration will, of necessity, determine the superior to preserve its relative condition inviolate. If the continuance of the connexion be an object with the superior Country, she will find the strength of it to depend upon maintaining her advantage.

In fact, such a connexion can hardly ever be supposed to take place between countries equal in strength and power; because, in the very terms of it, it admits an actual inferiority. But, if by any concession on the part of one of them such a connexion



nexion should take place, it must soon of necessity dissolve, if they preserve their respective equality of power. Where there exists no controul open or disguised, by which the opinion of one of the connected countries can be moulded to the will of the other, they will necessarily differ upon questions, upon which not to agree will be to separate. It follows therefore, that if such a connexion has taken place between countries unequal in strength and power, it cannot subsist a moment when that inequality is removed. I do not mean that it would require a mathematical equality to destroy this kind of connexion, but such an approach to it, as that the difference would be easily made up by national pride and human arrogance.

I ask any man who knows the past history of these countries, or indeed has the slightest insight whatever into human nature, if this country had, at any time past, possessed an equal share in the fleets, armies and resources of the empire with Great Britain, and could have made her voice be heard, not only within the pale of that realm, but in Europe also, as loudly as that of her sister country, whether the connexion, *as it now subsists*, between these kingdoms, could have endured to this day?

If we will then have the connexion *in its present form*, we must be content with the *studied* preservation of that decided inferiority, by virtue of which alone it has continued, and by virtue



of which alone it can be preserved; or, look forward, if that inferiority should be in any great degree removed, to final separation and mutual debasement.

It is the prospect of this latter alternative which has united all our internal enemies in one common effort against this measure—whether we remain in our present connexion, a discontented and divided people, or, by any fortunate termination of our present distractions, grow under it a powerful and wealthy nation; in either event, they consider the dissolution of our present connexion as morally certain. In the former state they will have a continuance of all the materials upon which they have hitherto worked with such industry and success; and in the latter, they know that in the course of events imperial questions must of necessity arise between the two countries, upon which they will unavoidably differ. The reasons which at present, on all such occasions, secure the acquiescence of Ireland, will then in a great degree have ceased; and they have little knowledge of the world, who do not see that the season of prosperity and power is not the moment when a nation will conciliate or concede. If the countries do not agree, and they cannot agree without submission on one part, the connexion, with very little assistance from treason and disaffection, is at an end for ever.

Indeed so obvious does this appear to the honest opposers of an Union, for I do not deny there are many such, that Mr. Jebb, whose candour, sincerity

cerity and good sense, those who differ most in opinion from him, are ready to allow, proposes certain regulations between the two countries, to guard against the effect of a difference of opinion upon such imperial questions as may arise between them—and how does he do this? why, by an absolute surrender to *the Parliament of England* of the Purse and the Sword of this nation. \*

We all know that, however the theory of our Constitution may have invested the King with the power of declaring war, the practical exercise of this right is of necessity in Parliament. From the appropriation of the Supplies, which is now the law of the land, we know that the King could not support war a single day without the consent of Parliament—Whenever therefore the King of England declares war, it is in effect the Parliament of England that have done so. What then does Mr. Jebb propose? Why, that in all such cases the Parliament of Ireland should *be bound* to follow—that is, to follow in the only way in which a Parliament can follow, by granting a proportionate supply. However, this country, though enjoying a separate and independent Parliament, may have hitherto deemed it *expedient* to follow the example of Great Britain in the wars, in which the latter has thought proper to engage, it would be hard that she should altogether renounce by compact the theoretical right of judging of this expediency. Yet the most sensible and judicious opposer of an Union considers such a renunciation as not altogether

\* Mr. Jebb's Pamphlet, pages 24, 25.



gether unnecessary in giving security and permanency to the connexion which at present subsists between the kingdoms.

But to secure this connexion in its present state, Mr. Jebb not only gives up the Purse and the Sword, but is willing to stipulate that the King, Lords and Commons of independent Ireland should not do any thing which may *affect*, such are his words, the religion of the state, without the concurrence of the British Parliament. They must not provide for a single Dissenting Clergyman, or grant the smallest privilege to the Roman Catholic (for such acts, by construction, may be said to *affect* the religion of the state,) without the previous approbation of a foreign legislature. Even Mr. Jebb, the decided opposer of an Union, considers all these sacrifices as instrumental, if not necessary, in preserving the connexion between the countries as it now stands.

But even those concessions would not do—the seed of dissolution is incorporated in its frame; it is perishable as the breath of man, and precarious as human conduct.

If any accident were to happen, within the period of eighteen years, to our present Sovereign and his immediate successor, a question would arise between the two nations, which nothing but the providence of God, on a former occasion, prevented from dashing our fragile connexion to pieces—whether if such a question should again arise, he would so favour us a second time, is beyond the limit of human conjecture, but it is within the



the compass of human prudence to prevent its recurrence.

But this is not all, the permanency of this connexion depends upon the personal conduct of the Sovereign. I can easily suppose a case, remote indeed from our fears under the gracious reign of his present Majesty, which might render a revolution in this country, as to the person of the Sovereign, matter of melancholy and ever-to-be-deplored necessity in this kingdom, while the same measure would not be justified in England. The executive authority here is under no controul from the English Parliament. Suppose King James the second had been more sagacious than he was, but equally intent on the introduction of popery, whenever circumstances would enable him to make the attempt with any probability of success; suppose from policy he had maintained the just rights and liberties of England, and in pursuance of his favourite scheme, confined his machinations in favour of popery to this kingdom. As the connexion stands at present between the countries, England could not interfere, so says the Minister of England, in the domestic concerns of imperial Ireland—The maintenance of our establishment must have been left to the honesty of our own Parliament, and the zeal of the Protestant inhabitants of the land. The mutual independence of each country under the form of distinct legislatures would prevent any conjunction of their authorities to resist the encroachment. Suppose the pertinacity of the King on the one hand, and the firmness of his Protestant subjects on

on the other, had carried matters to extremity, and that the latter had been successful in the struggle—the Executive authority of the country must have shifted hands, or we should have set up a new form of Government for ourselves; in either case the connexion between the kingdoms must have been at an end.

If the countries were connected by an incorporated Union, such a dissolution of their unity could not be effected. The acts of the common Sovereign would be subject to the inspection and control of the Imperial Parliament—he could not play one kingdom against the other—an undue or tyrannical exercise of the Prerogative, in any part of the Empire, would constitutionally excite the vigilance of the common legislature, and constitutionally demand its interposition. If the regal authority should be transferred from the person of the offending Monarch, the transfer would embrace the Executive power of both Islands, and though a shock might be given to the regal succession, the Union of the People would remain untouched.

It is melancholy to think on the extravagancies to which an heated imagination has led some men on this subject.\* One author, a *known friend to British connexion*, says, “were an Union fraught with blessings, were it the elixir of life, you ought to reject it.” What must be the opinion of that man of our understandings, if he supposes we can be affected by idle rant of this kind? Is this the sobriety of discussion, which a question like the present demands?—

\* An Address, &c. by a *Friend to Ireland*.



mands?—yet in this manner, it has been for the most part treated.—The changes are perpetually rung upon our independence. You are asked, with a gravity that would be contemptible, if it were not wicked;” will you annihilate independent Ireland?”—Let us examine this independence.

I approach the sentiments of the honest part of my countrymen on this subject with respect; they spring from a sacred principle, the love of our common country; but I wish them to consider calmly the true nature of this independence, and to caution them against sacrificing a better and more valuable interest, nay, the very basis upon which that independence rests, to false notions of dignity and pride.—This strong sense, and jealous feeling of Irish independence, sprung up with the recovery of our rights in 1782; but the true nature of it, has, in my mind, been generally misunderstood. National independence, in the strict sense of that word, is not applicable to the situation of this Kingdom. The Crown of Ireland is annexed to, and dependent upon the Crown of Great Britain.—In this sense Ireland is a dependent Kingdom;—as far as that Crown is influenced in the exercise of its prerogative within this Kingdom, by the sentiments of the people and parliament of England, so far is this Kingdom, in that respect, a dependent kingdom. But there is a circumstance peculiar to the internal condition of this Kingdom, which still more encreases its dependence;—the Religion of the minority of its inhabitants

bitants is the established Religion; and the landed property and political power, are in the hands of that minority. This is an unnatural state of things, were we to take this Country solely into our view, and could never subsist without external and foreign assistance. We derive this aid altogether from Great Britain; and it is morally, I might say physically, impossible, that the present establishment in Church and State, could subsist one year without that support—in this sense again, we are a dependent Kingdom

Whenever, therefore, the assertion of Irish independence may lead us to hazard British connexion, we ought to take special care that we proceed with temper and caution, that we are not misled by a name, and that in the theoretical assertion of the abstract right, we do not lose even that degree of it which we practically possess. The only consistent advocates for the strict independence of Ireland, are the friends of separation.

If it could be shewn, that this same notion of Independence has deluded the nation on former occasions, and induced them to cast away with disdain the most solid advantages, and endanger their best interests, nay their very existence as a nation; that they were unconscious at the time of the deceitfulness of its operation, altho' now it be universally acknowledged; should not the consideration of these facts induce us to pause for a moment, to look into our own minds, and to ask whether there be not some danger of our being  
again



again deluded in the consideration of other momentous questions of imperial policy by a phantom.

Two striking instances of this kind have occurred in our history within a few years; the commercial propositions in the year 1785, and the regency in 1789. \* It seems now to be generally acknowledged, that on both these occasions the true interests of the nation and the empire were sacrificed to the founding of a name. Yet let me ask any man who recollects those periods, and the temper and language that were held on those occasions, whether the cry of independence was not then as loud and overbearing, particularly on the former, as it is at present: on the latter, indeed, the public indignation was somewhat divided between those who denied the right of Ireland to elect a regent separately from Great Britain, and those who basely deserted the standard of their Royal Master in the hour of visitation and calamity: on both, however, the true interests of this Country were sacrificed, and the still small voice of reason and truth was drowned, as it may be now, in the popular cry of independent Ireland. It is the nature of good sense, to repose for a time, in silence, upon all great subjects of mental enquiry; the flippant declaimer, to whom meditation and reflection would be useless, is ready in a moment; and it often happens in the affairs of nations, that

D

their

\* See Note (a)

their greatest interests are irrevocably decided upon, while passion and prejudice have been the only advocates attended to.

It cannot be contested that, as has been already observed by a very sensible writer on this subject, “ if the Parliament of Ireland should at any time exert its *inherent and acknowledged powers* on any great question of imperial policy contrary to the declared sense of the Parliament of England, the empire would be endangered or dissolved.” Now, in the struggles of British and Irish faction for power, and in the cabals of party working upon the spirit of independence, can any man take upon him to say, that the future exertions of these acknowledged powers, may not produce this effect? Our present Constitution of distinct national legislatures, as it gave birth to this spirit, so it will foster and support it. The sense of danger, and the feeling of calamity, that might possibly restrain the exercise of this power at present, will, every day, lose their influence. Hostile as this principle is to the permanency of our present connexion with Great Britain, it must grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength; a state of prosperity, must foment and cherish it.—To those who think as I do, that British connexion is the vital principle which supports us a nation, it is obvious that, if that connexion remains upon the footing it now is, the hour of maturity will be the hour of our dissolution. The practical assertion of this strict  
right



right of independence will be listened to in the moment when wealth and power shall have given birth to their natural progeny, pride and arrogance; we shall then eat of this forbidden fruit, and "in the day that we do so, we shall surely die."

That such would be the effect of any great advances we might make as a nation, is as obvious to Great Britain as it can be to us; it cannot escape the sagacity of any rational enquirer; it is founded in the principles of human nature, called into action by the circumstances in which we are placed. Can it then be expected that she will be an indifferent spectator of that growing wealth, which must tear us from her for ever? Will not her jealousy watch over our progress, and say "thus far you may go, and no further?" If the connexion be maintained under those circumstances, will it not perpetuate a spirit of national antipathy, which has been already so prejudicial to the interests of both?

It is curious to observe the strange topics of argument which have been used by the opposers of an Union.—Heaven and Earth are ransacked in search of objections. One of the gentlemen who have written upon this subject, says, "the Almighty has thrown the channel as a perpetual barrier to an Union between Great Britain and Ireland." If this be so, the impiety of man has done much to encroach upon this decree of Providence. Cromwell, devout as he was, <sup>l u g i s</sup> d at it when he summoned representatives from

from this country to sit in the English Parliament. Molineux, that great defender of the independence of his country, whose happiness in his opinion, as I shall shew hereafter, would have been best effected by an Union, does not rest his vindication of the rights of his country upon so ridiculous a position.— He says, “it is absurd to fancy kingdoms are separate and distinct, merely from their geographical *distinction* of territories; kingdoms become *distinct* by *distinct jurisdictions*, and *authorities legislative and executive*.” He refers his proposition expressly to the situation of Great Britain and Ireland; he saw a much greater likelihood of opposition to an Union, from the mistaken pride of England, than any imaginary will of the Deity, to be collected from his works. Having shewn several instances from records of representatives from this country serving in Parliament in England, in the reigns of Edward the First and Edward the Third; and it appearing that Ireland had been bound by laws made in such Parliaments, he says, “if, from these last mentioned records it be concluded, that the Parliament of England may bind Ireland, it must be allowed that the people of Ireland ought to have their representatives in the Parliament of England;” and this, “I believe,”\*—says Molineux, “*we should be willing enough to embrace, but this is an happiness we can hardly hope for.*” I have transcribed his words exactly. If Molyneux, the warm and enlightened advocate of the liberties of Ireland, had seen in this  
dreaded

\* See note (b.)



dreaded name of Union, “ \* the annihilation of our Parliament, the subversion of our Constitution, the depopulation of our metropolis, and the conversion of the kingdom into one vast barrack ;” if he had discovered in this measure his fellow citizens reduced to an “ † humiliated, degraded, and discontented people,” would he have described it as an offer we would very willingly embrace, but as a happiness we could not hope to obtain ? would he have thus stated it, if it had appeared to him, as only calculated to continue “ ‡ religious discontents, jealousies and disturbances, insurrections, and perhaps rebellions,” for such had existed in his time ? He thought very differently from the politicians of this day ; a due representation of this country in the British Parliament, one King, one Legislature, was to him a consummation devoutly to be wished, though he thought it not within the scope of reasonable expectation.

This measure has been called an innovation : I need not express my respect and regard for the persons who principally supported the resolution which contained that word ; an enemy, however, would say, it was studiously and invidiously adopted ; he would say, those who used it well knew the terror it was calculated to inspire ; that they well knew the idea was necessarily associated with those modern attempts in politics, which have subverted all moral order, and blasted the happiness of human kind ; that they hoped to excite the dread which the review of such things was likely to produce ; and that, therefore, they called an Union an innovation. He would say,

\* Mr. Jebb. † Ditto. ‡ Ditto.

say, they relied upon what they supposed to be the literal acceptation of the term, as a sufficient justification for using it, and that they considered an acquittal on the letter of a law as equal in legal effect to the full establishment of innocence; and that in this, they were misled by the habits of their profession. I only say, that their zeal for a moment made them unjust. What is the real meaning of the word? It is an introduction of change by novelty. Now, the truth is, that neither the practice, as I have shewn, much less the idea of an Union, is a novelty in the history of this country; and though it may be admitted to be a change, it is not an innovation; it overturns no one principle in the nature and essence of our Constitution; it leaves the Church and the State exactly as they were; and professes, as its vital principle, the protection of all ancient establishment; it affects no disturbance of the orders of society, civil or religious; it is a proposed change in *form*, for the avowed purpose of preventing *radical change*, and resisting *innovation in substance*. Was it not then uncandid, not to say insidious, at this day, to call such a measure an innovation? We know that appellations vary their significations, according to times and circumstances; any man unacquainted with the mover of the resolutions would say, that the phrase was fixed upon, as carrying with it, at this day, a signification offensive and revolting—it is associated with all the horrors of the French Revolution, and the very sound of it in politics, brings in review to the reflecting mind, all the crimes  
that



that have there degraded and insulted humanity ; he would say, that therefore, and therefore only, the term was made use of, and that it was intended thereby to couple the measure of an Union with the new fangled chimeras of French philosophy, and to affix to the one the contempt and execration so justly merited by the other.

But even an introduction of change by novelties, if this measure were of that kind, might be both justifiable and necessary. Bacon says, “ he that will not apply *new* remedies must expect new *evils*, for time is the greatest *innovator* ; and if time, of course, alter things to the worse, and *wisdom* and *council* shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end ?”

The question is not whether any other policy on the part of England would have rendered an Union unnecessary, but whether in consequence of that policy, or *any other cause*, it is now become necessary ? This question is perpetually argued, as if we were not a kingdom connected with England, or, at least, as if that connexion left us practically, as it does theoretically independent ; now one proposition is as false as the other. We are *dependently connected* with England : it is important to know even disagreeable truths, if the knowledge of them be necessary to our right conduct.

But let us see the scheme upon which the opposers of an Union rest their hopes of happiness for this kingdom, their plan of maintaining the present connexion between the countries. Mr. Jebb details it,—

it,—We are first, as I observed before, to give up the purse and the sword to England, and a joint controul in every thing which may affect the religion of the State. But this is not all; “an Irish Parliament is to make one great effort of Patriotism—it is to bury in oblivion the errors and vices of their misguided Countrymen!” Modest and practicable—“the Catholics are to wait *patiently* the operation of time, and the workings of generosity in *Irish* bosoms.—They are to declare publicly that to an *Irish* Parliament only, will they be indebted for the full and complete advancement to the privileges and honours of the Constitution,” (to an Irish Parliament, who *left to itself*, kicked their humble petition out of doors, and only allowed them to be heard when they spoke through the mouth of their Sovereign)—“then indeed,” says the writer, “we shall become a powerful people.”

It is to this Utopian scheme of a subjugation of human passions and prejudices, when no alteration is proposed of those circumstances which have engendered them, coupled with an unequivocal surrender of even the theoretical independence we now enjoy, that we are to look forward as the wonder-working procurer of peace and power! There is something curious in this counter-project which is to serve us in place of an Union; wherever it is useful it is impracticable, and wherever it is practicable it is

\* P. 24, 25.

† P. 23.



is degrading. It demonstrates, however, that, even in the opinion of those who oppose an Union, we *cannot go on as we are* ; that some great change is necessary, by which our condition may be improved for the better—that this cannot be done without a sacrifice in a great degree both of the practical exercise of the right of independence, and of the theoretical right itself—that to remain unconnected with England, we must record by compact our *necessary subjection*, and submit ourselves and our posterity, in the most material points of our self-government as a nation, to the controul and interference of a foreign legislature.

I now ask the candid advocates of the independence of this Country, for to them only I address myself, whether this proposed system for maintaining the connexion does not more necessarily and completely sacrifice the independence of this Country, than an Union upon fair and liberal terms could possibly do ?

The Scotch Union has been much dwelt upon by the opposers of this measure, either as furnishing no analogy on which to build the argument in favour of the Union now in contemplation, or as abounding in many respects with arguments against it. The Union with Scotland, however necessary, as I am free to admit it was to England, was not necessary, however beneficial it might be to the former Kingdom; and the opposers of that Union in Scotland might have used many arguments that cannot

E

with

with any truth or justice be adopted here. The Scots are not as we are (I speak to the Protestant and most of the Roman Catholic inhabitants of this Country) descendants of Englishmen; there had been little or no mixture between the nations; the Kingdoms had been always separate, generally hostile, and till very recently before that period the Scotch had enjoyed an ancient and independent Monarchy; the regal state to which national pride clings with ardour and affection, had existed within the memory of many of them; the father could tell it to his child, and the child could catch the enthusiasm of the father. Ancient and honourable prejudices stood in array against the measure, and nothing could be opposed to them but the cold calculations of commercial profits.—Is our case such? Is the Union now sought, an Union with strangers and hereditary foes? What regal state, what ancient Monarchy, do we part with? Do we not return to that parent stock from whence we sprung? Is there, as was the case in Scotland, any dissimilarity of law, established religion, usages, or customs to stand in the way of our incorporation?

In another respect, also, the situation of the Countries was material different—there was no party in Scotland enjoying exclusively the power, and in a great degree, the wealth of the State, to whose existence in those particulars the protecting arm of England was essential. A Union could be no otherwise necessary to Scotland than

as



as a security to defend her against England—here it is necessary to defend us against ourselves. There is an enemy within our dwellings and our bosoms, whose machinations can be only stilled by the imposing authority of the English name—whatever career we may expect to run as a nation, whatever route of glory we may hope to take, it is that influence must support our progress.

The Scottish Union had its opposers, as has that of this day, many of them wise and honest; among those Mr. Fletcher of Salton stands conspicuous—his principal objection rested on the incorporation of the two Parliaments; he was of opinion, that the rights to be reserved to Scotland would never be preserved in that united Parliament; and he specifies particularly the objects which, he supposes, however secured by the terms of the Union, must, in the course of time, be necessarily sacrificed by the predominating influence of England; they may be reduced to six particulars:

First, he thought it impossible that the established Church of Scotland could support itself a moment after the incorporation of the two legislatures; for this opinion, he gives his arguments at length, which are so strong, that scarcely any thing but experience could have confuted them. The uninterrupted enjoyment, however, of the church establishment in Scotland, as settled at the Union, from that time to the present moment, shews how groundless his fears were.

Second,

Second, He apprehended the nobility in Scotland would be utterly destroyed; in this, also, time has refuted his conjectures.

Third, He states, what indeed comprehends all the other subjects of his terror, "that the Scottish Parliament having subverted the whole fabric of the Scottish constitution, an united Parliament would overturn whatever is secured by the Union." It is unnecessary to observe, how unfounded his fears were in this particular also.

Fourth, He lays it down as certain, that in all questions of trade, the English Members will out-vote the Scotch.\* Sir John Dalrymple, himself a Scotchman, says in a modern publication, "that the fears of the Scotch, and above all of Mr. Fletcher, that in every thing concerning the interest of Scotland, the forty-five Members of Scotland would be weighed down by the weight of English Members, has been disproved by the event.

Fifth,† He considers as certain, that the municipal laws, and local judicatures for administering justice, would be utterly abolished.

Sixth, He alarms the fears of his countrymen, by more than insinuating, that the equivalent settled by the articles of Union, to be paid by England to Scotland, for the undertaking of the Scots to pay part of the English debts, will be withheld by the united Parliament. In all these particulars, his fears are substantially refuted; that spirit, which so boldly ventured to prophesy, wandered in darkness without the slightest

\* See Note (c.)

† See Note (d.)



slightest glimpse into futurity. The Church has been upheld ; the nobility have been preserved ; the trade has been protected ; the settlement at the Union un-  
 infringed ; the municipal laws, \* save in a single alteration stipulated for by the articles of Union, and beneficial to both countries, are still in force ; the local judicatures continued ; and the stipulated equivalent regularly paid. So wild were the conjectures of an honest and an able man, when misled by the inveterate prejudices of national independence ! If such a man was deceived in his speculations upon an Union ; if his vaunted developement of unborn misery has ended in the idle ravings of a distempered fancy ; what claim in the name of common sense have the present prophets of ill to the credit which they seek ? Had not Scotland more ground for rational fears, than the people of this country can possibly entertain ? Is not the church we wish to support the Church of England ? Are not the laws and the judicatures of the respective countries precisely the same ? Is there any ancient animosity to subdue, or inveterate prejudices to overcome ? Have we the remembered splendour of any antient Monarchy to catch and influence our affections, and to make our hearts sicken at the prospect of departing greatness ? All that could cause the apprehensions, wound the pride, and excite the regret of a nation, which had been recently before *really* independent, assembled in authoritative opposition to the Scottish Union. The arguments, built upon those circumstances, were captivating in the extreme. † Mr. Fletcher, of Salton, was

\* The alteration of the law of treason in Scotland.

† See Note (c.)

was aware of their force, and has turned them to the greatest advantage for his cause ; time, however, the unpurchasable arbiter of all political reasoning, has decided against them, and they remain the melancholy, but instructive monument of the fallacy of human reason, when it is influenced in the investigation of truth, by the pressure of human passions.

The opposition which this measure met with in Scotland, was as virulent and ill-founded as any which is likely to occur in this Kingdom ; there have existed, and there will at times exist in every Community, men, whose interest, and whose passions, are at variance with the sober and rational interest of their Country—great, and in many instances, malignant opposition was given to the Scottish Union. The Jacobite of that day was nearly as hostile to the interest of the United Kingdoms, as the Jacobin of this. There is this in common between them : that, as the destruction of our present constitution, through the means of a French invasion, was the favourite measure to which the efforts of the Jacobite were directed ; so the same end through the same means constitutes the fond hope of the Jacobin now ; with this view the Jacobite of Scotland resisted an Union with England in his day ; with the same view, the Jacobin of Ireland resists it now.

I trust, however, the future historian of these times, will record the completion of this measure in nearly the same terms used by the historian of the Scottish Union: They are so apposite to many circumstances which have taken place, and are likely  
still



still to take place in the progress of this business here, that I cannot forbear to transcribe them. Speaking of the passing of the first Article, he says, \* “ It was on  
 “ this happy day, the first Article of the Union was  
 “ passed in Parliament, after infinite struggles, clamour, railing and tumults of a party, who, however  
 “ they endeavoured to engage the honest scrupulous part  
 “ of the people with them, yet gave this discovery of  
 “ the principles of their own actions, in that there was  
 “ an entire conjunction of the most† opposite factions  
 “ in this particular, and the very discovery of this,  
 “ opened the eyes of a great many people, who, in the  
 “ simplicity of their hearts, had joined in opposition to  
 “ an Union; but when they saw the *tendency of things,*  
 “ *and whither it led;* when they saw the society they  
 “ were going to embark with, when they saw the enemies of Protestant settlement, all engaged, and *those*  
 “ *very people who had filled the land with the groans of*  
 “ *oppression, and the cries of blood,* coming to join hands  
 “ with them, against an Union with England: when  
 “ they saw that, to shun an Union with Christians,  
 “ they were of necessity to come to an Union with  
 “ devils, men that had transformed themselves into  
 “ the very infernal nature, and visibly acted from  
 “ principles, in this particular diabolical, in that they  
 “ intended to erect the absolute subjection of the nation to the lust and unbounded appetites of *lawless*  
 “ *tyrants;* when they saw these things so plainly, we  
 “ then found an alteration, and the *best, most thinking,*  
 “ and

\* De Foe's history of the Union, pages 244, 5.

† The Jacobite, Prelatical, and Popish interests.

“and *most judicious people*, began first to stop and con-  
 sider, and afterwards wholly to withdraw from the  
 party; and the clamour of the people, as if come  
 to a crisis, began not to be as universal, but to  
 abate; and the more it did so, the more the *secret*  
 party, which lay at the bottom of all the rest,  
 began to appear and distinguish themselves.” It  
 is scarcely possible to imagine language more appli-  
 cable to the present crisis, the same *clamour and*  
*railing*, the same *conjunction* of the most *opposite fac-*  
*tions*, the same *misleading of the honest and scrupulous*  
*part of the people*, a similar *tendency* in all their en-  
 deavours to a separation from England, the perfect  
 picture of the Jacobin, who had filled the land with  
 the groans of oppression, and the cries of blood;  
 the same consequence of an Union with devils, if  
 the present Union with Christians be rejected; the  
 same infernal attempt to submit the nation to the lust  
 and unbounded appetite of lawless tyrants. It is  
 impossible not to recognize in these traits, the Jacobin  
 and his French Idol. May the issue be similar! may  
 such designs be defeated, and this Country and Eng-  
 land become one and indissoluble!

Perhaps the intended plan of Union between the  
 two Kingdoms is nothing more to be desired, than  
 in this, that it promotes the general interests of the  
 several inhabitants of this Country as distinguished  
 into religious classes; and holds out to each of them  
 something that ameliorates their particular condition.  
 In political consideration, the religious persuasions of  
 Ireland resolve themselves into two, Protestant and  
 Roman



Roman Catholic—any attempt utterly to subdue under existing circumstances the fear of the Protestant, or the jealousies of the Roman Catholic, would be idle and Utopian; human passions and prejudices, when they have once grown to any considerable strength, will not fall suddenly to decay; the auspicious undertaking must commence in the removal or abatement of the causes which produced them.

As long as you confine the contention of Protestant and Catholic to this island, the fears on the one hand, and the jealousies on the other, must continue. The recollection of Catholic claims, the contemplation of their superior numbers, the memory of victory, perhaps abused on the part of the Protestants, must make the latter tenacious of the strong hold they possess in the constitution, and on which they probably altogether depend, for the protection of their liberty and property. If the Catholics were to be admitted, in the present state of the constitution, to equal privileges with the Protestant, the latter might fear the issue of the contest against Catholic encroachment within the walls of a national Senate. He must know, that every day would add to the strength of that body which has been the object of his habitual fears; and he may not irrationally be supposed to see in the complete adoption of the Catholic into the constitution, not only the extinction of his power and authority, but the instrument of his final downfall and destruction.

As long therefore as our connexion remains as it is, you cannot root out of the Protestant mind these, if I may so call them, hereditary apprehensions.—

Recent events have given them additional stability. The steady resistance then with which it is likely the Protestant would in our present state, and so long as it continues, make to any further concessions to Catholic claims, leaves the original jealousies of that body subsisting in full vigour; the latter will, as heretofore, persevere in their attempts at what they call emancipation, and their opponents unite in a determined maintenance of that ascendancy, on which they rely for the support of every thing which is dear to them.

Under these circumstances, no amelioration of our condition can be hoped—it would be vain and childish to look to that Utopian oblivion of errors and vices, so benevolently, but impracticably, recommended by Mr. Jebb. Such a speculation may gratify a good, but can never mislead a wise man; the latter calculates upon human beings as they are, and applies his remedy to the imperfection of our natures, without vainly relying upon qualities, which however they may be found in individuals, never act upon mankind in the gross.

If our connexion remains as it is, the fears of the Protestant, and the jealousies of the Catholic will increase; that internal contention, the bane of Irish happiness, which degrades our morals, while it checks our prosperity, will be perpetuated among us. The constitutional disease which has grown up with our growth, will be confirmed in all its malignancy, and impede, as it has impeded, our progress as a nation.

Let us consider then for a moment, how things may be changed in those particulars, in case a Union  
should



should take place between the countries. I do not mean to enquire in this place, whether a grant of equal privileges to the Roman Catholic is to make any part of the terms of the Union? if it should, it is obvious that all ground for jealousy would be removed from the Roman Catholic; and it would be easy to prove, that all rational motives for fear would be thereby taken away from the Protestant. He would have the whole mass of Protestant influence in the empire arrayed within the walls of an Imperial Parliament, to stand between him and Roman Catholic encroachment. The Roman Catholic would have enough to satisfy the most querulous on the subject of political liberty; but his power would be as dust in the balance to the attainment of political ascendancy.\*

On the other hand, if it should not be within the scheme of the councils of both countries to yield at this time the last remaining privilege which the Catholics require, I still say, the condition of both parties in this country, will be much better than it is.

With respect to the Protestant, his apprehension of the Catholic will of necessity diminish. He would obtain, by an Union, greater strength to withhold with less danger from concession—as you diminish  
his

\* It will not be seriously urged as an objection (I know it has been foolishly insisted on) that by admitting the Catholics to a participation of privileges in a state, where they will be outnumbered by the Protestants, you mock their hopes and give them only the shadow, while you deprive them of the substance. What is this but saying, what none but their enemy will say, that what the Catholics wish for, is not equality of right, but superiority of power?

his fears, you diminish (such is the nature of man) his hatred also. Placed beyond the reach of injury by the interposing shield of the great and united Protestant interest of the empire, he would no longer regard the Roman Catholic as an object of terror; he would cease to consider the Catholic pretensions as a subject of personal concern, and leave them as a matter of imperial regulation to the presiding councils of the state; he would feel that he was safe in either alternative of concession or resistance; and, relieved from the political storm which has hitherto agitated his life, he would give an undivided attention to the management of his private concerns.

The condition of the Catholic will not be less affected for the better—an Union, even if it should not be attended in the first instance with the full gratification of his desires, will exceedingly diminish the force of those reasons which might be urged against them. In the decrease of Protestant apprehension, he would trace the latent seeds of future benefit to himself; he would perceive, as the one sinks from the view, the other must rise into light; and in the extinction of Protestant fear, he would find the consummation of Catholic privileges; he would perceive, that whatever claims he may find it prudent hereafter to make, must be made to an imperial Parliament, in which local jealousies would give way to enlarged views of general policy. He knows, that in a great degree, whatever benefits he has already received, he owes to the liberal sentiments of a foreign Cabinet, prevailing over domestic apprehensions;



sions; and he would look forward, in the necessary decay of the latter, to the full attainment of his wishes. He knows, that causes like these, though certain in their operation, are necessarily slow in their effects: and he would fill the interval with growing reconciliation, and anticipating hope. There would be an end of that system, which, it is alledged, has been adopted with respect to Ireland, of playing parties one against the other. Our connexion with England would not find its support, (as has been said by many) in the *promoted* divisions of the country; but *that* being secured, Ireland would be left to its *unrestrained* powers of improvement; and we should be, what we are capable of, a wise and happy people.

It may be necessary to say a few words on the competency of our Parliament, to effect a legislative Union, on the part of this country with Great Britain. Those who deny this competency, have many difficulties to overcome. The principle upon which they rest all their argument, is this: They suppose the Constitution to be something absolutely fixed, and utterly independent of parliamentary controul, within which Parliament may move, but beyond which it cannot proceed. Now I should be glad to know the precise extent of this circle, within whose magic ring, the powers of Parliament are confined.—Are the prerogatives of the Crown, one of its limitations? It is said, and justly, that these prerogatives of the Crown are vested in it for the good of the people; and that the Crown is a mere trustee of those prerogatives for their use, and can neither enlarge nor diminish them.—

them.—In this I perfectly agree ; but at what period of our history was the prerogative of the Crown so fixed as to be out of the reach of parliamentary controul? We know perfectly well, that this prerogative, forming so essential a part of our Constitution, has been always the subject of parliamentary interference ; and that to that interference, we owe most of our present liberty. It follows then, that parliamentary controul is not limited by the prerogative of the Crown.

Let us try further :—Is the right of the elective franchise one of those impregnable fortresses upon which Parliament cannot call for the surrender? Our constitutional history, if I may so speak, is a continued series of parliamentary controul over this privilege, supposed to lie without the bounds of its jurisdiction. Theoretically speaking, this should be the strong ground of those who argue against the authority of Parliament. In abstract reasoning, nothing can appear more absurd, than that persons delegated by virtue of a certain recognized authority should have power to rescind or modify that very authority, by the exercise of which alone they enjoy any power whatsoever ; that is, that the thing which is *produced*, should have a paramount power over the thing *producing*. Experience, however, sets at nought this refinement of *a priori* reasoning ; accordingly the legislature has constantly exercised a full and uncontrouled authority over this fundamental privilege of the people.—They have limited and enlarged, from time to time, as to them seemed fit, both the numbers and qualification



cation of electors; and on one occasion they absolutely disfranchised, (and their power in doing this was never questioned) a certain class of the inhabitants of this country, amounting to two-thirds of the whole; but they have not confined themselves to a discretionary modification of the number of electors, but have even pointed out to those electors, whom, and whom only, they shall elect. By laws made within this century, the whole body of Roman Catholics are excluded from the power of sitting in Parliament. We see, therefore, that this controul extends both over those who elect, and over those who can be elected.

But Parliament cannot only diminish the number of those capable of electing, or of being elected, but it even can, under certain circumstances, diminish the number of those by whom the people are represented in Parliament.

We know that all the boroughs in this kingdom, the representation from which constitutes so large a part of our House of Commons, derive the power which enables them to send members to Parliament, under grants from the Crown; now, by the common law of the land, it is of the essence of such grants from the Crown that they are forfeitable by an abuse of the franchises conferred by such grants. In ordinary cases this abuse is enquirable into by the Court of King's Bench, and the charter must fall if a sufficient abuse be established. With respect to abuses of the elective franchise, the enquiry into them, as it concerns the purity of Parliament itself,

is

is with great propriety reserved to Parliament alone; and Parliament both can and ought to disfranchise a borough guilty of notorious corruption in the exercise of its elective franchise.

But its power goes still further; the duration of Parliament itself is subject to its controul. It has occasionally limited and prolonged the date of its own existence, in opposition to the known limitation of its political life, at the time of its delegation. Thus, we see, that the prerogative of the Crown, the privileges of the people, the constitution of Parliament itself, as to duration and numbers, are all subject to Legislative controul.

By the exercise of these various powers in Parliament, our constitution has become what it is; in the first attempts which Parliament made in any of those particulars, the argument of incompetence was always urged, and always overruled. If there be any things by their nature beyond the authority of Parliament, it is the extension of their own power, and the curtailment of those privileges from the exercise of which those powers flow. Can the argument of incompetence apply to any thing more directly than it does to them? Yet how stationary should we have been in political improvement, if this argument of incompetence had prevailed!

Those who suppose our Constitution fixed beyond the power of alteration or improvement, mistake its most valuable quality; the power of Parliament, *always exercised*, of moulding it according to the dictates of wisdom and experience, to secure the liberty,



liberty, and promote the prosperity of the country, under all changes and circumstances is its distinguished feature. This power, in its moral extent, has no other limitation than the good of the people; and in its physical, none known to the Constitution.

As man has no other guide than the limited wisdom and goodness assigned to his nature by the Deity, this portion of wisdom and goodness must be trusted to in the conduct of human affairs. Experience has taught us, that the interests of society are best managed by a delegated number of those of the community, likely to have the greatest share of the qualities I have mentioned; they are the *head* of the political body allotted to think, direct and govern; they are not to be dictated to by any faction in the State; nor can their power, *while the Constitution lasts*, even be controuled by an *adverse will* on the part of the people—If this *will* be clearly ascertained and clearly expressed, no doubt, when so expressed and ascertained, it will be attended to by Parliament; their wisdom will make it a limitation of their moral right, because it amounts in fact, to a limitation of their physical power.

In no case is this express assent necessary on the part of the people, because, having the power of expressing their wishes by petition, their assent is a necessary presumption from their silence or acquiescence. Whenever, therefore, there is no restraint upon public opinion, from fraud or force, it may be fairly said, that whatever Parliament can do, they may do.—That there is no such restraint now,

is evident from the freedom of discussion with which this question has been treated—in the very seat of Government the people have met, and, as far as the opinion of a district goes, have expressed their opinion against it.

What would be the consequence, if the power now denied by some people to Parliament, really did not belong to it? I mean the power of concluding an Union with Great Britain, with the assent of the people really expressed or necessarily implied.—Let us suppose for a moment, (however unwilling the opposers of this measure may be to concede so much) that the Majority of the people are really of opinion, that an Union with Great Britain would be advantageous under all circumstances to this Kingdom—are the present forms of our Constitution, so fixed, that they must not bend even to the will of the people?—this will hardly be said. Then, I ask any reasonable man, what is the mode recognized by our Constitution of giving expression to the will of the people?—can they speak in any other way, save *through* Parliament or *to* Parliament—that is, when they are silent and acquiesce, the act of the legislature is, by necessary presumption, the act of the people; and where a measure is in agitation before Parliament, upon which the people are divided in sentiment, those who are of opinion against the measure shew that opinion by petition against it, and those who agree shew their assent either by express petition  
for



for the measure, or by acquiescence from which that assent is necessarily to be presumed. This is the beaten road of our Constitution, out of which, I do not wish to travel in favour of any new-fangled theories of the hour.—I like not those systems which require an utter dissolution of Government, upon every suggested improvement; but approve of that wisdom which has infused into our Constitution a principle of self-correction, by which it is always adequate, without any violation of essential form or principles, to amend itself. Now in a case like the present, it will not be contested, that the proposed alteration is within the power of the people to accomplish: the expression of their will, *according to the forms of the Constitution*, is the only way by which such a measure can be constitutionally effected. What mode then has the Constitution provided for this expression of the will of the people? I say again, it can only be spoken thro' Parliament, or to Parliament—but this expression of the people's will would be nugatory, if there did not exist some tribunal, which was *alone* competent to determine what was the will of the people. Nor can there be any other tribunal than the Parliament, competent to determine what is the preponderating will of the people upon any question where there exists a division of sentiment like the present—like all other human tribunals, they may err in their judgment, but this inherent infirmity cannot be got rid of in the management of human concerns by human agents. They  
and

and they only, can decide—if they cannot, who can? either we are to remain fixed as we are, and neither the people or parliament can effect a change—this will not be contended—or our situation is capable of change, either through the people or parliament—this will be conceded. Has then the Constitution provided for the expression of the people's will, otherwise than through Parliament and to Parliament? Is there any other way in which the people can constitutionally act? if not, the final decision must be with Parliament—that is, if our situation can be changed, it can only be effected by Parliament, judging of the people's will, and carrying it into effect.

I have chosen to argue this question, rather upon principle than authority; there is a jealousy in most men which makes them yield with reluctance to the sound of a name. Were I speaking to Lawyers only, it might be sufficient to mention the names of Lord Coke, Lord Somers, and Blackstone. The two last are express upon the very point in question. There is an expression in Blackstone on this subject, that I find noticed by the elegant and ingenious author of the Letters to Mr. Saurin and Mr. Jebb, which is very remarkable: Speaking of the powers of Parliament, he says, “it can create afresh the constitution of the kingdom;” and he refers to the Union with Scotland as an instance—the opinion of those who contend that Parliament is incompetent to effect an Union, is grounded upon an assumption, that an Union amounts to a dissolution of the constitution,  
and



and the erection of another, different in its nature and principle. I ask any man, does an Union do more than extend the basis in point of territory of popular representation, and enlarge as a necessary consequence the representative body to a proportional extent with the territory represented?—what other change in principle is wrought by it? When this modification takes place, have we not still the English Constitution? Is there a single circumstance by which that constitution has obtained the admiration of the world, lost to us by that modification? Do not our laws and our religion remain? Are they not guarded by the same principle of representative Government? Are the prerogatives of the crown increased, or the privileges of the subject diminished?—When the countries were first connected, had their relative situation permitted an Union, would not the adoption of an Union at that time have amounted to a grant to this country of the English Constitution? that Constitution was accepted at that time by this country, in the only way it could then be received; but if an Union had been practicable, we should still have enjoyed the English Constitution. Shall we not enjoy it after an Union? How then is it subverted?

I think it is perfectly obvious, that if our connexion with England be rendered more secure by an Union, and the spirit of republicanism, which is kept alive only by the hope of separation, be thereby extinguished; if the fears of one party in the kingdom, and the jealousies of the other, be in a great degree

degree mitigated, if not subdued, the trade of the country, were it even to remain upon its present footing as to commercial privileges, would necessarily advance and flourish. This, however, would be merely the result of internal quiet, and would be a consequence of that state, were it produced in any other way whatever. This I admit; but it does not appear to me, that that state of internal quiet can be either so suddenly, or so permanently secured in any way as by an Union. I have argued this question throughout, upon a supposition, that we were a people not devoted to final misery as a nation; of course, that our understandings were not so blinded, nor our hearts so hardened, but that we would be convinced by truths and swayed by interest. Under this hope I shall say a few, and but a few words, upon the effect this measure may have upon our trade.

I have already stated its effect upon that, as a measure likely to produce and secure internal tranquillity. —It is said indeed, that we gain nothing by an Union in point of trade, or at least nothing that may not be effected without it. I need not say, that it makes no difference whatever in the obtaining any particular object, whether the thing through which we are to attain it, *cannot* or *will not* be done—therefore if this *will not* be done for us without an Union, it is precisely the same thing to us as if it *could not* be done without an Union. We have now, as we ought always to have had, what is properly enough called a free trade; that is, according to Mr. Flood's definition of it, a liberty of trading with all the world,



world, subject only to our own restrictions, and *those* of that country with whom the trade is carried on.— Such restraints are of necessity inseparably incident to all foreign trade. In all matters of trade, England, and Ireland are, under our present connexion, as distinct and independent as Ireland and Portugal ; that is, the trade we carry on with her, is a free trade, according to the definition given by Mr. Flood.

In our trade with England is to be included not only our trade with the Islands of Great Britain, but with all her Foreign Settlements, in whatever part of the world they may be situated. I admit I am not well acquainted with the detail of the trade of Ireland, but I believe I do not hazard too much in saying, that our trade with Great Britain, and all her various settlements, is greater and more productive than our trade with all the rest of the world. All this trade, which constitutes so great a portion of our wealth and revenue, we hold *under our present connexion* altogether by the curtesy of England ; that is, subject to the restrictions which her own Parliament may impose upon her own ports and commodities. Such restrictions exist at present to a considerable degree, upon our direct trade with England ; they have been lately taken off from our trade with the West Indies ; but the power which took them off may impose them again, without the least violation of right ; against this, we have no security at present, but her prudence or generosity ; so that for the permanent enjoyment of the most beneficial source of our wealth, we depend

pend altogether upon the prudence and generosity of England. We know how England has, during the present war, encreased and is still likely to encrease her foreign possessions. Our trade to all these must, as we now stand connected, depend upon the same security.

How would an Union alter our condition in this respect? The balance of trade between this country and England is enormously in favour of Ireland. An Union would of necessity take off the prohibitions which at present lie heavy on many articles of trade, which might be exported from this country; and of course, still more encrease that balance of trade already so much in our favour. An Union, therefore, would not only extend the trade we at present possess to a variety of articles, from the exportation of which we are now in effect excluded, but it would change the security upon which we hold that trade from a courtesy to a right. We seem to forget that our linen trade, upon which the commercial prosperity of this country absolutely turns, depends upon the breath of an English Parliament; that that country pays 37*l.* per. cent. upon the Irish linens which she consumes, in order to secure to us the monopoly of her market; that is, she has laid a duty of 37*l.* per cent. upon certain foreign linens in her own market, by the operation of which duty alone, the foreign merchants could be prevented from underselling us;\* then it follows therefore, that if it requires a duty of 37*l.* per cent. upon the foreign  
linens

\* See Chalmers's estimate.



linens to secure the English market to Irish linens, those foreign linens might be sold in the English market if that duty did not exist 37l. per cent. or nearly so much cheaper than the Irish linens, and that of course the English who purchase Irish linens pay 37l. per cent. in the value of the article, in order to secure the exclusive trade in that article to this country. It is alledged, and we have every reason to believe it to be true, that the security which our linens have for preference in the English market is to be permanently continued by the terms of the Union—so that it is strange to hear men contending that our trade is not to be benefited by the adoption of an Union, when not only the tenure of that trade is changed from a curtesy to a right, but that many prohibitions, by which our trade is in a variety of instances confined, must of necessity be abolished, if an Union should take place.

It is said by the opposers of this measure, that it will confer no benefit either in point of extent or security to the trade we already have, yet in the same breath they alledge, that the only object of the British Minister in proposing it to this country, is to encrease the revenue he may draw from it—but how there can be an encrease of revenue without an encrease of trade, they have utterly failed to shew. It will not be contended, that under the present system of things there is any producible revenue that could be had from this country, that is not in the hands of the Minister, if he chooses to call for it. Those who recollect the taxes upon salt and upon  
H
leather,

leather, laid within a very little time upon those articles, will not say, that his power in obtaining revenue here is limited by the will, or I had almost said, by the capacity of the people. His object, then, by an Union, if his object be taxation, (which can scarcely be, when there are so many other more pressing causes) cannot be the extension of his power of taxation, but the encrease of those sources of revenue upon which alone taxation can effectually operate; this can only be effected by exciting internal industry, and opening new sources of foreign trade; and no doubt this and through these means is one of the objects intended by an Union.

With respect to the argument, grounded on the probable encrease of absentees, this may in general be answered to it, that if it has any force, it applies to all empires where, from the extent of them, the seat of Government is necessarily at a distance from the extremities; and I believe it was the first time it was ever urged as an objection against concentrating the powers of a state by the erection of a single and supreme authority, or used as an argument for weakening imperial power by the establishment or continuance of local Government. If, therefore, the exaggerations that have taken place on this subject, were really founded in fact, they would be no argument against the adoption of a measure otherwise founded in general utility.

The truth is, this topic has been much and needlessly insisted upon, and much and insidiously exaggerated. The necessary attendance upon Parliament in this kingdom is in ordinary times, from four to five  
months



months in the year ; it must be admitted, that this attendance is accompanied with considerable benefit to the place where the meeting of Parliament is held ; but it necessarily draws, between the members of both Houses, from four to five hundred persons, with all their attendants, from their various residences in the different parts of the kingdom. What particular use arises to the kingdom at large, from such a concourse to the capital, I leave to those who are more curious in such calculations than I am ; this however I think is obvious, that if an Union leaves from three to four hundred of those persons, to the cultivation of their estates, the improvement of their tenantry, and the promotion of manufactures, no great mischief is done by rendering the attendance of one hundred of them necessary for the winter months in London.

At present, as soon as Parliament rises in this country, a much greater number of the Lords and Commons, than would in case of an Union be deputed to the Imperial Parliament, actually leave this kingdom to spend their summers in the watering places in England ; they settle all their Irish affairs, during the time they are necessarily obliged to remain here, and are really absent from the kingdom upon the present system, a much longer period of time in the year, than would be necessary for their attendance upon Parliament, in case an Union should take place. In such an event, hardly any person will be deputed, who will not have Irish affairs to attend to, and Irish interests to cultivate. The only time left to him, for that purpose, will be the Summer months,

months, which he now usually spends in England, or would, if circumstances permitted, consume in rambles on the Continent. The Winter residence in Ireland upon the present system, leaves him at full leisure to indulge himself in these particulars, and the Summer rolls away without a single visit to his country residence in this kingdom. This course will be inverted as to those who may be deputed to the Imperial Parliament.—Summer being the only time in the year they can attend to their Irish affairs, will be devoted to that purpose, and their residence in this kingdom, while they do reside, will be usefully employed in the different parts of the kingdom where their property and connexions are, instead of being confined, as it now in a great degree is to the capital in the course of their parliamentary attendance. With respect to all those who now form the two Houses of Parliament, they, with the exception of one hundred, will not be under any necessity of even occasional absence; if, however, any great number of them should follow the seat of Government, it will only be for the period of parliamentary attendance. The same argument, as to the probable return of those who will be really deputed, applies equally to them; and the probability is, that an Union with England would only vary the season of absence, without actually encreasing the number of absentees.

I will now take a general, but short view of this question:—The history of this country, at least such part of it as deserves the name of history, commences with



with our connexion with England—from that period we date our being as a nation, and the history of that connexion, is the history of our country. The present inhabitants of Ireland are in the proportion of fourteen to one the descendants of English settlers;—though these last cover the island at this day from one extremity of it to the other, the progress of English power and occupancy was extremely slow. It was not until after a lapse of four centuries, that it could be said to have been fully established. During this period the connexion between the countries was the natural result of the condition of both; loose and undefined, it was sometimes a strict tyranny on the part of the Sovereign, more often anarchy and rebellion on the part of the people. Bound to England in no way but in the dissoluble connexion of a common Sovereign, Ireland excited in that country none of those presiding cares, which would have been bestowed on it, had it been considered part of itself, nor did there exist between them that cordial affection that would have arisen from unity of Government and interest—confined and illiberal notions of trade, the error of the times, checked the latent powers of the country, and the unfortunate divisions of the inhabitants among themselves aided the operations of external jealousy. Time, which brings wisdom to nations, as well as to individuals, has shewn the impolicy of commercial restraints, and England has thrown open, what should never have been closed, nearly the whole world to our trading speculations. The original error in our connexion, however, remains tainting

tainting the sources of public prosperity, and fomenting, instead of allaying, the internal disorders under which we labour: *Giving to one country an authority contested in principle, and irresistible in fact ;—to the other abstract independence and necessary subjection—keeping alive a distinctness of interest, by preserving a distinctness of state, and holding out to our enemies foreign and domestic, a temptation to conspiracy and invasion, by the apparent practicability of separation.*

That the nature of our connexion with England has been the inviting cause which led to the conspiracies, from which we so recently have escaped, and may be so to those which we have yet to encounter, is manifest from this, that no such attempts have been made in Scotland, though its separation from England would of necessity be almost an equal blow to imperial greatness. Recent, I mean comparatively recent, as the connexion between England and Scotland is, and unfortified as it was, for a long time, by coalescing habits and mutual affection, yet no invasion or conspiracy has taken place there with a view to separation since the Union. The rebellions of 1715, and 1745, were of a perfectly different nature; their object was not to separate Scotland from England; but to place the united Crown of both countries upon the head of the abdicated family. It will not be said that those conspiracies and invasions took place here rather than in Scotland, because this country could not be so easily assisted from England as Scotland.—

The



The fact is directly the reverse : considering the peculiar nature of the power of England, this country could certainly receive assistance, and with less expence and more facility than Scotland could possibly do. This then could not be the reason ; it arose from the radical defect in our present connexion, which, slight in its own nature as any political connexion can well be, *was necessarily attended with such a mode of general administration as furnished continual ground for disaffection and treason to work upon, in irritating the passions, and alienating the affections of the people.*

It is admitted, and was expressly so admitted by the present Speaker of the House of Commons, that without an Union in point of trade, these countries would probably be separated for ever. We have already an Union of religion established, and an Union of the executive is the bond of our present political connexion.—One would think matters like these necessarily pointed out the utility and uniformity of a legislative Union. Private ambition, local interest, and rooted prejudices are however in array against it ; they may succeed as they have often succeeded, but truth will remain when they are forgotten.

Even if an Union should take place, its beneficial effects will not be immediately visible ; the evils it is at once intended and calculated to cure, are too deeply rooted to be suddenly removed—the dispositions of men, upon the good cultivation of which, independent of all positive law, the happiness of society depends, are slowly changed from  
evil

evil to good—a prejudice deeply rooted, a passion which has long controuled, will maintain their influence when the circumstances by which they were first excited, have been long past and forgotten. We are recently escaped from the horrors of a Civil War, the result of long concealed and active machination—the spirit which produced it, though suppressed, is not effectually laid—it walks yet in darkness—and only waits its time for a second visitation. We have still to guard against those men, who will be ever found, in times of disturbance, ready to uproot the State from its foundation—who, ruined in character, and desperate in hope, in tranquil times would sink and be forgotten, and who can look to the attainment of wealth and power only through the plunder of revolutions—such still infest the secret recesses and the open walks of society—while you leave them hope, you leave them activity : that cannot be taken from them while we remain as we are. The inherent principle of dissolution which they see and upon which they calculate, that exists in the nature of our present connexion with England, keeps alive their hopes, and animates their exertions—even in the division which this question has occasioned, they see cause for exultation—their labours to promote that division are not even disguised. Men, who a few weeks since would not be allowed to taint the private circles of life with their sentiments or opinions, now find ready listeners in the  
dupes



dupes of independence.—Men, whom their fellow Citizens refused to associate with as soldiers, and with whom they would not make common cause to defend their Country from invasion, now find their place in deliberating assemblies, and talk in the high tone of honest independent Irishmen. Attention rests upon their lips, while they flatter this public prejudice; and the honest, though *discountenanced* supporter of what he deemed good for his Country, retires ashamed \* and unheard. I feel a duty, however, superior to the call of those private habits which I have cultivated, because I love them; and I appeal (if this tract should be preserved by the importance of the question of which it treats) from the present day to posterity.

## NOTES.

\* It may be necessary to inform some of my readers, that there is such a thing as one man blushing for another.

# NOTES.

---

## NOTE (a.)

\* It is a well-known fact, that the great outcry in this Country against the commercial propositions, was, in a great degree, occasioned by the opposition in England. Mr. Fox declared in England, that the commercial propositions were a tame surrender of the trade and Commerce of England, and opposed them entirely on that ground in the English Parliament; and at the same time, his friends wrote over to their followers here, that they were ruinous to the Commerce and Constitution of this Country—for these two curious facts, see his own speech on that occasion *passim*, and the Attorney General's, now Earl of Clare, speech on the propositions. The commercial propositions were grounded upon an intended Union of trade, as the present measure embraces both an Union of trade and legislation. The observations of the present Speaker on the former occasion, are strikingly apposite to the present question, so far as it relates to trade; and it might be easily shewn to legislation also.—Expressing his hope, that the propositions would be adopted, he says, “when commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the Kingdom will cease to look to rivalry.—Each will make that fabric that it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot do advantageously. Labour will then be truly employed to profit, and not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies, or *legislative interference*. This system will attain its *real object*, *consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire*, by encouraging the communications of their markets among themselves, with preference to every



every part against all strangers;"—and still more strongly in another part of the same speech. "If," says he, "this *infatuated Country* gives up the present offer, she may look for it again, in vain: *things cannot remain as they are*. Commercial jealousy is roused—it will increase with *two independent legislatures*; and without an United interest in commerce, in a commercial empire, political Union will receive many shocks, and separation of interests must threaten separation of connexion, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at, as a possible event.

#### N O T E (b.)

See the edition of Molyneux's Case of Ireland, printed in the year 1698, pages 97 and 98; it is a curious fact, that an edition of this book was published in Dublin about the year 1782, or 1783, and the words "that Ireland would willingly embrace an Union, but that it was an happiness she could not hope for," are omitted.

#### N O T E (c.)

The Malt-tax has been relied upon by the opposers of an Union as an instance in which the united Parliament violated the Articles of Union; the misrepresentations on this subject have been a gross perversion of historical truth; it is provided by the Fourteenth Article of the Union, "that any Malt to be made in that part of the united kingdom, now called Scotland, shall not be charged with any duty upon Malt during this present war."—When the duty came to be imposed, the question was, whether the war alluded to by the Articles was at an end or not; it was a mere question of time and not of principle; the preliminaries of peace had been signed; hostilities had ceased on all sides; and both Houses of Parliament had been informed of those facts by the speech from the Throne. The war in fact was at an end; both the letter and the spirit of the Articles were answered by this construction,

construction, and in this the so much relied on violation of the Article altogether consists.

By the Eighth Article of the Union, several allowances are made as drawbacks upon Fish cured in Scotland and exported again; the reason of this was, that the salt with which they were cured, paying a great duty, that duty ought to be drawn back upon exportation. Now between the ratifying the treaty, and the first of May when it was to take place, a very great quantity of foreign salt (French) was imported, which, by the passing of all the goods soimported as before, paid none of the English duties. It was alledged, that as the duty did not commence upon the salt, so the drawback ought not to commence, which was the effect of that duty; but the letter of the act being express, (Art. 8,) that all Fish cured with foreign salt shall drawback, &c. the Parliament voted it, and Scotland got about 20,000*l.* drawback when they paid little or nothing duty. So that we see, even the letter of one of the Articles was set up against the manifest spirit of it, in order to give the Scotch an advantage.

#### N O T E (d.)

By the Eighteenth Article of the Scottish Union, a power was reserved to the United Parliament, of making all laws concerning public right, policy and Civil Government, the same throughout the whole United Countries; but the laws concerning private right were not to be altered, but for the evident utility of subjects within Scotland. In consequence of the first mentioned provision in this article, the law of treason, which perhaps more emphatically than any other law relates to public right, policy and Civil Government, was made the same through the United Kingdom. This is another of the trumpeted violations of Scottish Union. Some men have been guilty of those misrepresentations, from whose habits and education, a very different conduct might have been expected.

#### N O T E



## N O T E (e)

The character of Mr. Fletcher of Salton, as a writer, is thus given by Sir John Dalrymple—His style is easily known, because every word has a precise meaning, and distinct from any other sentence; the structure of the sentence is as simple, but as various, as that used in private conversation; the method in his composition is perfectly regular, but artfully concealed; and one singularity in his reasoning is, that the arguments are placed in an order to derive force from what went before, and to give force to what comes after, so as to seem to grow out of each other; but above all, when he is animated by passion, his flashes are sometimes as quick as lightning, and sometimes followed by the thunder of a period. All which mark an original genius, but made chaste by reading the antients.

THE END.





